

they otherwise might have been, and previous persecution had taught the Lollards as a sect to lie very quiet. In 1466, however, 'an heretic was ybrende [burnt] at the Tower Hill/ to use the words of a contemporary chronicler, * for he despised the sacrament of the altar; his name was William Barlowe, and he dwelled at Walden. (Essex). And he and his wife were abjured long time before. And my Lord of London kept him in prison long time, and he would not make no confession to no priest but only unto God, and said that no priest had no more power to hear confession than Jack Hare.'¹ Eight years later another Lollard named John Goos was burnt, also on Tower Hill. * In a slippery and faithless age/ says the historian of that unhappy period, 'it is refreshing to find one man who could die for his convictions. Staunch to the last, he asked to be allowed to dine before going to execution. He said, "I ete nowe a good and competent dyner, for I shall passe a lytell sharpe shower or I go to souper."²

In the reign of Henry the Seventh a spirit seemed to be moving on the face of the waters. An ever-increasing number of men burnt for Lollardy was only one of the signs of the times, but it is the one that most concerns us here, for the history of these martyrdoms affords ample proof that a revival of WyclifQsm had set on foot a serious movement for reformation in England, before the good news came from Germany. The evidence set down against these men in the records of the spiritual courts shows that the sect had undergone some change in the course of a hundred years. The Lollards had become more than ever what it was their boast to be—* simple men ;' their religion was a religion of common-sense rather than of learning. This resulted from two causes, their long separation from the wealthier and better educated classes, and the destruction by the authorities of WyclinVs theological writings. His Latin books and the bulk of his English pamphlets had been exterminated in England. His 'Wicket/ a popular tract against Transubstantia-tion, seems alone to have remained to his followers in the sixteenth century. That work, and translations of parts of the Bible, formed the literature of Protestant communities

¹ Gregory's *Chronicle*, p. 233, Camden, new series, xvii.
Ramsay, ii, 455*